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Wrightwood residents Nick and Christine Hoban enjoy a walk together as heavy snow falls on Highway 2 near Wrightwood, Calif., on Monday, Dec. 12, 2022.

Associated Press

Massive U.S. storm brings tornadoes to South, blizzard threat

By JAMIE STENGLE and STEPHEN GROVES
Associated Press

DALLAS (AP) — A massive storm blowing across the country spawned tornadoes that wrecked homes and injured a handful of people in parts of Oklahoma and Texas,

including the Dallas-Fort Worth area, as much of the central United States from the Rocky Mountains to the Midwest braced Tuesday for blizzard-like conditions.

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Stairs project at Rodgers Beach officially inaugurated



More than 20 new plant species discovered in Aruba



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Massive U.S. storm brings tornadoes to South, blizzard threat

Continued from Front

An area stretching from Montana into western Nebraska and Colorado was under blizzard warnings, and the National Weather Service said that as much as 2 feet (61 centimeters) of snow was possible in some areas of western South Dakota and northwestern Nebraska. Ice and sleet were expected in the eastern Great Plains.

In the south, a line of thunderstorms that moved across North Texas and Oklahoma in the early morning hours brought tornadoes, damaging winds, hail and heavy rain, said National Weather Service meteorologist Tom Bradshaw. Authorities on Tuesday reported dozens of damaged homes and businesses and several people injured. In the Fort Worth suburbs, photos sent by the North Richland Hills police department, showed a home without a roof, a tree that had been split in half and an overturned vehicle in a parking lot. About 20 homes and businesses were damaged in the storm, the police said.

In nearby Grapevine, police spokesperson Amanda McNew said there have been five confirmed injuries, yet no fatalities and no life-threatening injuries,

from the storms.

"So the main thing is that we've got everyone in a safe place," McNew said just after noon. "And so now we're starting the process of going through the city looking at damage to property, to businesses, homes and then roads to see what needs to be closed, what we can open and how soon we can open them."

Near Decatur, about 70 miles (113 kilometers) northwest of Dallas, the Wise County Office of Emergency Management said one person was injured from flying debris while traveling in their vehicle and the other was injured when their vehicle overturned due to high winds. One person was taken to the hospital and the other was treated at the scene. Meanwhile, a tornado damaged the Oklahoma town of Wayne shortly after 5 a.m. Tuesday. There were no deaths or injuries due to the tornado, McClain County Sheriff's Capt. Bryan Murrell said. But as authorities began assessing its impact Tuesday morning, it was clear there was widespread damage to Wayne, which is about 45 miles (72 kilometers) south of Oklahoma City.

"We've got multiple family structures with significant damage ... barns, power

lines down" in and around the town, Murrell said.

National Weather Service meteorologist Doug Speheger said wind speeds reached 111-135 mph (179-211 kph) and the tornado was rated EF-2. It was likely on the ground for about two to four minutes, according to the weather service. In parts of Iowa, Minnesota and South Dakota, the National Weather Service warned that up to about half an inch (2.5 centimeters) of ice could form and winds could gust up to 45 mph (72 kph). Power outages, tree damage, falling branches and hazardous travel conditions all threatened the region.

All of western Nebraska was under a blizzard warning from Tuesday through Thursday, and the National Weather Services said up to 20 inches (51 centimeters) of snow was expected in the northwest. Winds of more than 50 mph (80 kph) at times will make it impossible to see outdoors, officials said.

The Nebraska Department of Transportation closed stretches of Interstate 80 and Interstate 76 as heavy snow and high winds made travel dangerous. The Nebraska State Patrol, which was called to deal with several crashes and jackknifed semitrailers over-



Adam Lee, left, and Jr. Ibarra, right, carry a table from a friend's home after it was destroyed by a tornado, Tuesday, Dec. 13, 2022, in Wayne, Okla.

Associated Press

night, urged people to stay off the roads.

"There's essentially no one traveling right now," said Justin McCallum, a manager at the Flying J truck stop at Ogallala, Nebraska. He said he got to work before the roads were closed, but likely won't be able to get back home Tuesday. "I can see to the first poles outside the doors, but I can't see the rest of the lot right outside. I'll probably just get a motel room here tonight." In Colorado, all roads were closed in the northeast quadrant of the state. And a 260-mile (418-kilometer) stretch of Interstate 90 across western South Dakota was closed Tuesday morning due to "freezing rain, heavy snow, and high winds," the state's Depart-

ment of Transportation said. Interstate 29 was also expected to close and secondary highways will likely become "impassable," the department said.

Xcel Energy, one of the region's largest electric providers, had boosted staff in anticipation of power outages. A middle school in Sioux Falls lost power Tuesday morning and sent students home early. Power outages affecting about 1,700 customers in the eastern part of the state were reported by utility providers Tuesday.

In southern Minnesota, winds gusting up to 50 mph (80 kph) had reduced visibility and in the Twin Cities metro area, sleet and gravel mixed with rain on the roads. □



White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre speaks during the daily briefing at the White House in Washington, Monday, Dec. 12, 2022.

Associated Press

By ZEKE MILLER

AP White House Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — Amid a surge in hateful rhetoric and violence, President Joe Biden on Monday

formed a new interagency group to develop a national strategy to combat antisemitism, the White House announced.

The action comes at a time when anti-Jewish vitriol is

Biden forms interagency group to draft antisemitism strategy

being spread by prominent public figures.

Led by the White House Domestic Policy and National Security councils, the new group will consult with community leaders, government officials, lawmakers and activists as it drafts a national strategy to tackle antisemitism and Holocaust denial.

The action follows on Biden's public commitment to healing the "soul of the nation" after seeing hate groups marching in Charlottesville, Virginia, with torches and swastikas in 2017, an episode that propelled his run for the White

House. "This strategy will raise understanding about antisemitism and the threat it poses to the Jewish community and all Americans, address antisemitic harassment and abuse both online and offline, seek to prevent antisemitic attacks and incidents, and encourage whole-of-society efforts to counter antisemitism and build a more inclusive nation," press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said in a statement.

Former President Donald Trump recently hosted Nick Fuentes, a Holocaust-denying white supremacist, at Trump's Mar-a-Lago home

in Florida. The rapper Ye — formerly known as Kanye West — expressed love for Adolf Hitler in an interview. Basketball star Kyrie Irving appeared to promote an antisemitic film on social media.

Neo-Nazi trolls are clamoring to return to Twitter as new CEO Elon Musk grants "amnesty" to suspended accounts.

The announcement comes a week after Doug Emhoff, the husband of Vice President Kamala Harris, played host to Jewish leaders to discuss the rise in antisemitism in the U.S. and around the world. □

Fusion breakthrough is a milestone for climate, clean energy

By **MATTHEW DALY, MICHAEL PHILLIS, JENNIFER McDERMOTT and MADDIE BURAKOFF**

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Scientists announced Tuesday that they have for the first time produced more energy in a fusion reaction than was used to ignite it a major breakthrough in the decades-long quest to harness the process that powers the sun. Researchers at the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory in California achieved the result, which is called net energy gain, the Energy Department said. Net energy gain has been an elusive goal because fusion happens at such high temperatures and pressures that it is incredibly difficult to control. The breakthrough will pave the way for advancements in national defense and the future of clean power, Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm and other officials said.

"Ignition allows us to replicate for the first time certain conditions that are found only in the stars and the sun," Granholm told a news conference in Washington. "This milestone moves us one significant step closer to the possibility of zero-carbon abundant fusion energy powering our society."

Fusion ignition is "one of the most impressive scientific feats of the 21st century," Granholm said, adding that the breakthrough "will go down in the history books."

Appearing with Granholm, White House science adviser Arati Prabhakar called the fusion ignition "a tremendous example of what perseverance really can achieve" and "an engineering marvel beyond belief."

Proponents of fusion hope that it could one day offer nearly limitless, carbon-free energy and displace fossil fuels and other traditional energy sources. Producing energy that powers homes and businesses from fusion is still decades away. But researchers said the announcement marked a sig-

nificant advance nonetheless. "It's almost like it's a starting gun going off," said professor Dennis Whyte, director of the Plasma Science and Fusion Center at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and a leader in fusion research. "We should be pushing towards making fusion energy systems available to tackle climate change and energy security." Kim Budil, director of the Livermore Lab, said there are "very significant hurdles" to commercial use of fusion technology, but advances in recent years mean the technology is likely to be widely used in "a few decades" rather than 50 or 60 years as previously expected.

Fusion works by pressing hydrogen atoms into each other with such force that they combine into helium, releasing enormous amounts of energy and heat. Unlike other nuclear reactions, it doesn't create radioactive waste.

President Joe Biden called the breakthrough a good example of the need to continue to invest in research and development. "Look what's going on from the Department of Energy on the nuclear front. There's a lot of good news on the horizon," he said at the White House.

Billions of dollars and decades of work have gone into fusion research that has produced exhilarating results for fractions of a second. Previously, researchers at the National Ignition Facility, the division of Lawrence Livermore where the success took place, used 192 lasers and temperatures multiple times hotter than the center of the sun to create an extremely brief fusion reaction.

The lasers focus an enormous amount of heat on a small metal can. The result is a superheated plasma environment where fusion may occur.

Riccardo Betti, a professor at the University of Rochester and expert in laser fusion, said there's a long road ahead before the net energy gain leads to sustainable electricity. □



A major scientific breakthrough in fusion research is announced at the Department of Energy with, from left, Kim Budil, director of Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, National Nuclear Security Administration director Jill Hruby, Secretary of Energy Jennifer Granholm, National Nuclear Security Administration Deputy Administrator for Defense Programs Marvin Adams, and Arati Prabhakar, the president's science adviser, in Washington, Tuesday, Dec. 13, 2022.

Associated Press

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U.S. study: Over half of car crash victims had drugs in system

By **TOM KRISHER**
AP Auto Writer

DETROIT (AP) — A large study by U.S. highway safety regulators found that more than half the people injured or killed in traffic crashes had one or more drugs, or alcohol, in their bloodstreams.

Also, just over 54% of injured drivers had drugs or alcohol in their systems, with tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), an active ingredient in marijuana, the most prevalent, followed by alcohol, the study published Tuesday by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration found.

Although the study authors say the results can't be used to gauge drug use on the roads nationwide, they say the high number of drivers, passengers and other road users with drugs in their systems is concerning. Acting NHTSA Administrator Ann Carlson said the study found that nearly 20% of the drivers tested had blood-alcohol levels of 0.08% or higher, exceeding the legal limit in every state. "We also are concerned that nearly 20% of road us-



This long exposure photo shows traffic driving on Roosevelt Boulevard in Philadelphia, Wednesday, May 25, 2022.

ers tested positive for two or more drugs, including alcohol," she said. "The use of multiple substances at once can magnify the impairing effects of each drug."

The study of blood tests taken at seven level-one trauma centers and four medical examiners' offices across the country comes at a critical time on U.S.

roadways. Traffic deaths have risen dramatically since the start of the pandemic to what officials describe as crisis levels. And more states are legalizing recreational use of marijuana with research just starting about the impact on traffic safety.

"It's scary to all of us in a way," said Michael Brooks, executive director of the

nonprofit Center for Auto Safety, a watchdog group. "But frankly, I don't think I'm that surprised."

Brooks, who is based in Washington, D.C., said he often sees people drive after drinking or smoking cannabis. "There's not a commute that goes by that I don't smell marijuana on the road, from someone actively smoking in a car in

Associated Press

front of me," he said.

The study took place between September of 2019 and July of 2021 at trauma centers in Miami and Jacksonville, Florida; Charlotte, North Carolina; Baltimore; Worcester, Massachusetts; Iowa City, Iowa; and Sacramento, California. Medical examiners at four of the sites also took part.

The study, which took blood-test data from 7,279 road users, also found that more than half of injured pedestrians and just over 43% of injured bicyclists had a drug in their bloodstreams.

Of the total number of patients, 25.1% tested positive for THC, 23.1% for alcohol, 10.8% for stimulants and 9.3% for opioids, according to the study.

The study was set up to measure prevalence of drug and alcohol use, but the numbers can't be used to show drug use on the roads nationwide because the hospitals were not picked to represent the entire country, said Amy Berning, a NHTSA research psychologist and one of the study authors. □

DeSantis seeks grand jury investigation of COVID-19 vaccines

By **FREIDA FRISARO**
Associated Press

MIAMI (AP) — Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis said Tuesday that he plans to petition the state's Supreme Court to convene a grand jury to investigate "any and all wrongdoing" with respect to the COVID-19 vaccines. The Republican governor, who is often mentioned as a possible presidential candidate in 2024, gave no specifics on what wrongdoing the panel would investigate, but suggested it would be in part aimed to jogging loose more information about the vaccines and potential harmful side effects.

He made the announcement following a roundtable with Florida Surgeon General Joseph Ladapo and a panel of scientists

and physicians, in which some discussion centered on the fact that pharmaceutical companies have not provided their data on the COVID-19 vaccines to independent researchers. "We'll be able to get the

data whether they want to give it or not," DeSantis said. "In Florida, it is illegal to mislead and misrepresent, especially when you are talking about the efficacy of a drug."

Statewide grand juries,

usually comprised of 18 people, can investigate criminal activity and issue indictments but also examine systemic problems in Florida and make recommendations. Recent such panels have tackled immigration issues and school safety. DeSantis noted that Florida recently "got \$3.2 billion through legal action against those responsible for the opioid crisis. So, it's not like this is something that's unprecedented." That money came largely through lawsuits and settlements with drug makers, retailers and distributors.

DeSantis said he expects to get approval from the Supreme Court for the statewide grand jury to be empaneled, likely in the Tampa Bay area.

"That will come with le-

gal processes that will be able to get more information and to bring legal accountability to those who committed misconduct," DeSantis said.

DeSantis also announced he is creating an entity called the a "Public Health Integrity Committee," which will include many of the physicians and scientists who participated in the roundtable on Tuesday.

He said that some people have lost faith in public health institutions, including the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention over the course of the pandemic. The governor has frequently spoken against CDC directives, including mask and vaccine mandates, and filed lawsuits to stop many from taking effect in Florida. □



Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis speaks on Nov. 19, 2022, in Las Vegas. Associated Press

EU reels as scandal tarnishes parliament's credibility

By **LORNE COOK**
Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — The European Union's parliament was reeling Tuesday with its credibility under threat, as a corruption scandal damaged lawmakers' careers and fingers were pointed at Qatari officials accused of bribing them to play down labor rights concerns ahead of the soccer World Cup.

The scandal, which started unfolding publicly last week, has scarred the reputation of the EU's only institution comprised of officials elected directly in the 27 member countries. It has undermined the assembly's claim to the moral high ground in its own investigations, such as into allegations of corruption in member country Hungary. "It is so profound because it jars so fundamentally with what parliament pretends to stand for," Ghent University Professor Hendrik Vos, an EU expert, told The Associated Press. "The parliament pretends to stand for transparency, unable to be bribed, to defend fundamental values. And then you get something like this." Referring to her barely suppressed "fury, my anger, my sorrow," Parliament



European Parliament President Roberta Metsola delivers her speech during a special session on lobbying Monday, Dec. 12, 2022 in Strasbourg, eastern France.

Associated Press

President Roberta Metsola told EU lawmakers on Monday that "European democracy is under attack." While they convened in Strasbourg, France, Belgian police picked up a haul of computer data from the assembly's other seat in Brussels.

The parliament, however, has always been a ripe target for people seeking funds or favors or to influence policy, from tobacco lobbyists and auto industry

representatives to officials from national governments. The difference this time is that Belgian prosecutors found out.

Police have now conducted more than 20 raids, mostly in Belgium but also in Italy, as part of a probe into bribery for political favors. Prosecutors suspect that some lawmakers and aides "were paid large sums of money or offered substantial gifts to influence Parliament's decisions."

Hundreds of thousands of euros have been found in homes and a suitcase in a hotel room.

The General Secretary of the International Trade Union Confederation, Luca Visentini, who was questioned by prosecutors over the affair, insisted Tuesday that he is "innocent of any wrongdoing," and "absolutely committed to the fight against corruption."

The scandal has rocked the Socialists and Democrats

(S&D) group in the Parliament. The group brings together center-left parties from across Europe. It remains the second-largest group in the 705-seat assembly but lost more than 30 seats in the last election as public support waned.

Prosecutors have charged four people, who have not been identified, with corruption, participation in a criminal group and money laundering. Parliament Vice President Eva Kaili of Greece was among them. Lawmakers voted overwhelmingly Tuesday to terminate her term in office.

Kaili, a 44-year-old Greek former TV presenter, is from the S&D. Belgian EU lawmaker Marc Tarabella stood down as a group member on Monday, suggesting he might be among those charged.

Three other S&D lawmakers have temporarily stopped doing senior duties, apparently because their parliamentary assistants were implicated.

Belgian authorities have not identified the Gulf country suspected of offering cash or gifts to officials but several members of the assembly and some Belgian media have linked the investigation to Qatar. □

Vatican cardinal sues for defamation in Quebec assault claim

By **NICOLE WINFIELD**
Associated Press

ROME (AP) — A Vatican cardinal sued a Canadian woman for defamation in a Canadian court on Tuesday after she accused him of sexual assault while he was archbishop of Quebec.

Cardinal Marc Ouellet, head of the Vatican's bishops' office, is seeking 100,000 Canadian dollars (US\$74,000) in compensatory damages for "injury to his reputation, honor and dignity," according to a copy of the complaint provided by Ouellet's office.

The woman, identified only as F., was one of several people who brought a class-action lawsuit against the archdiocese of Que-

bec in August that accused several priests, including Ouellet, of sexual abuse or assault. F. accused Ouel-

let of inappropriate, sexual touches on four occasions in the late 2000s.

Ouellet's countersuit, filed



Canadian Cardinal Marc Ouellet attends a Mass for the election of a new pope celebrated by Cardinal Angelo Sodano, not pictured, inside St. Peter's Basilica, at the Vatican, Tuesday, March 12, 2013.

Associated Press

Tuesday in the Superior Court in Quebec, repeats the cardinal's firm denial and says he has no recollection of meeting F.

His lawsuit said that even if the allegations were true, the woman's specific claims about his alleged behavior could not be construed as "sexual assault" or sexual abuse of minors, which are other crimes included in the class-action lawsuit.

"To associate Mr. Ouellet with such acts creates, in the mind of the ordinary citizen, the perception that Mr. Ouellet is an individual of the same ilk, which he is clearly not," the cardinal's lawsuit says.

It said he had experienced "significant psychological

anguish" since the woman's allegations went public and that his international reputation was "seriously tarnished."

Pope Francis shelved a church investigation into Ouellet after a priest investigator interviewed F. and determined there weren't grounds for further investigation. The Vatican said the investigator determined the woman didn't bring forward accusations that warranted it.

Calls seeking comment from F.'s attorney were not immediately returned.

In a statement, Ouellet said victims of sexual abuse are entitled to justice and compensation and said he was sensitive to their suffering. □

Mexico shuts down large migrant camp in the south

By **MARÍA VERZA**
Associated Press

MEXICO CITY (AP) — The Mexican government has dismantled a massive migrant camp in the southern state of Oaxaca where tens of thousands migrants have obtained temporary transit documents on their way to the United States border.

The move comes just days before a Dec. 21 deadline set by a United States federal judge to end asylum restrictions that have been used to expel asylum seekers crossing the U.S.-Mexico border.

The National Immigration Institute announced the closure of the camp in the remote town of San Pedro Tapanatepec in a statement Monday night without explaining its reasons. The agency said it would continue supporting migrants in other installations, without specifying where. Town officials in San Pedro Tapanatepec had requested the closure, which had been rumored for weeks. The camp originally opened in late July as a way to relieve pressure on the southern city of Tapachula at the border



Migrants cross the Mexico-U.S. border to surrender to U.S. Border Patrol agents, in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, Monday, Dec. 12, 2022.

with Guatemala. Migrants accumulating there had grown increasingly frustrated with the long wait for documents and lack of job opportunities.

Under U.S. pressure to control the flow of migrants, Mexico had tried to contain them within the southernmost part of the country. But with its asylum system overwhelmed by applications from people who

in most cases just want safe passage to the U.S. border, Mexico began issuing more temporary documents that give migrants a matter of days to travel within the country. Even with such documents, many migrants have reported authorities in other parts of the country destroying their papers and shipping them back to the southern border.

Still, the U.S. government

had reported record numbers of migrant encounters at the border in the past year.

The migrants who were in the San Pedro Tapanatepec camp are expected to make their way north. It was not immediately clear if Mexican authorities would revert to trying to keep them in the south.

At its height, there were

an estimated 15,000 migrants at the camp, which was made up of several large tents on the outskirts of town. Migrants typically spent several days there awaiting documents and then moved on.

Most hailed from Venezuela and Nicaragua and had been steered there by Mexican authorities.

According to federal government data, through early November, more than 135,000 migrants had passed through the camp, 50,000 of them just in October. The government has not published numbers for November and December, but the nongovernmental humanitarian organization Doctors Without Borders, which has a presence in the town, said the government had continued issuing documents to the end and had accelerated the process in the final days.

"What we saw was that the number of immigration personnel increased, the speed of the process increased a lot and the same day (the migrants) could go" with their documents, said Helmer Charris, part of the Doctors Without Borders team there. □

Associated Press

U.S., S. Korea, Japan to curb illicit N Korea cyber activities

By **NINIEK KARMINI and HYUNG-JIN KIM**

Associated Press
JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP) —



South Korean special representative for Korean Peninsula Peace and Security Affairs Kim Gunn, left, shakes hands with Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs Director General for Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau Takehiro Funakoshi, right, as U.S. special representative for North Korea who is also U.S. Ambassador to Indonesia, Sung Y. Kim, center, looks on at the star of their trilateral meeting on North Korea at the U.S. Embassy in Jakarta, Indonesia, Tuesday, Dec. 13, 2022.

Associated Press

Senior diplomats from the United States, South Korea and Japan agreed Tuesday to boost efforts to curb North Korea's illicit cyber activities and other methods to finance its nuclear program and evade international sanctions.

Meeting in Indonesia's capital, the three envoys in charge of North Korea's nuclear program also agreed to strengthen their trilateral security cooperation in the face of North Korea's advancing nuclear and missile arsenals.

In his opening remarks, Sung Kim, the U.S. envoy who also serves as Washington's ambassador in Jakarta, said that North Korea's provocative run of missile tests this year has proven yet again that the

North "presents one of the most serious security challenges in the region and beyond."

Calling North Korean threats "a global issue," Sung Kim said the challenges posed by North Korea can only be addressed when the international community stands together and speaks with one voice.

After the meeting, South Korea's Foreign Ministry said in a statement that the three envoys decided to "double down their efforts to block North Korea's financing of nuclear and missile programs via cyber activities and other means and its attempt to evade sanctions on the North."

North Korea has been under 11 rounds of United Nations sanctions imposed

over its repeated nuclear and missile tests since 2006. South Korean officials said recently that North Korea has been turning to cyber-crime and covert ship-to-ship transfers of unauthorized goods as a way to violate those U.N. sanctions. In recent months, North Korea test-fired dozens of missiles, including powerful ballistic weapons that flew over Japan and demonstrated a potential to reach the American mainland. But the U.N. Security Council has failed to adopt fresh sanctions on North Korea because of opposition from China and Russia, two veto-wielding members that are locked in confrontations with the United States. □

Stairs project at Rodgers Beach officially inaugurated

ORANJESTAD – This week during an extraordinary press conference, the official inauguration of the stairs project at Rodgers Beach in Sero Colorado took place. Aruban minister of Tourism, Mr. Dangui Oduber was present for the inauguration.

“The policy and vision of the Ministry of Tourism is directed on sustainable policy to attract affluent tourists, ensure the diversification of our tourism and continue investing in the product Aruba in order to offer a quality product, but also to keep our product competitive”, Oduber commented during the inauguration. He explained that since 2018 they had already announced a master plan for this area of Sero Colorado which includes enhancement and beautification of the entire area of Baby Beach and Rodgers Beach. In 2019 they were ready to begin executing the project and even held a groundbreaking ceremony for the Baby Beach project with the intention of executing all of this in one sole phase.

However, at the outbreak of the Covid pandemic in March 2020, the project was delayed for almost two years, during which practically no investment was done because the focus of the government was at that moment on managing the outbreak.

Oduber explained that once the pandemic was under relative control, they picked up the project, leaving the entire master plan with all the projects and plans on the table and announced the first phase of the Baby Beach project. Now this first phase has been delivered. Phase two was announced, public tender has taken place and the awarding will also begin. Phase three was also announced and execution will begin soon. “This will also become a beautiful project for Baby Beach, where we are going to improve infrastructure, en-



sure that there are facilities, fix tennis courts, ensure for good landscaping and this way improve the entire area of Baby Beach”, Oduber pointed out.

Regarding the area at Rodgers Beach which is part of the master plan for Sero Colorado, Oduber indicated that the intention is to expand the beach, create facilities and ensure that it becomes an attraction not only for locals but also for tourists.

For the stairs project, Oduber explained that the first phase was to restore the stairs completely, which was a nice project already on its own, after decades during which the stairs were in a bad state and were not used. The ministry of Tourism financed the first phase together with Aruba Tourism Authority in order to complete it and at the same time they were thinking about the second phase for the stairs project. “We brainstormed and arrived at the idea to make the stairs, which have 50 steps, a tourist attraction. This is why we also approached local artists to help us think about a design which will become a tourist attraction as well as for locals to take pictures and use it as an ‘Instagrammable moment’”, Oduber commented.

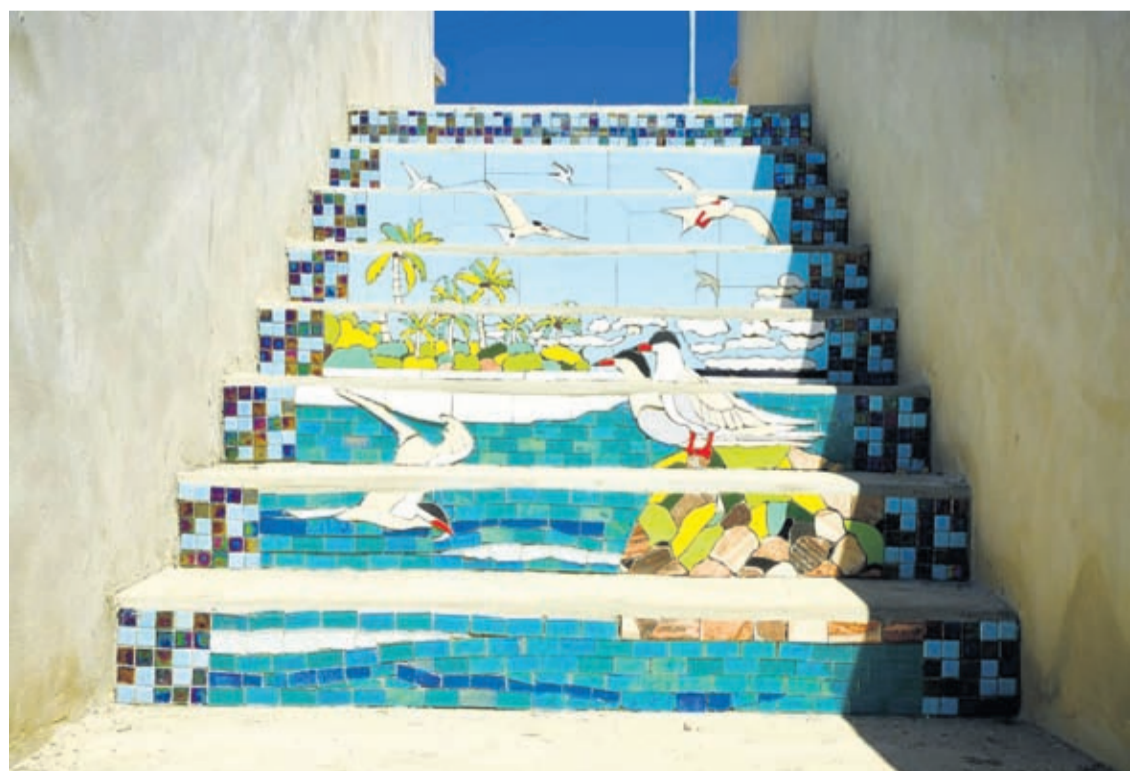
This project was executed in the past two months, and finally the moment to officially deliver the project

stairs goes along with the vision presented by the Ministry of Tourism in 2018 to complement and realize the master plan for Sero Colorado.

“I am glad that phase after phase we can materialize and crystallize the beautiful vision that we had for the improvement and beautification of this entire area, because I am convinced that this project, even though it can be a small project, has a big meaning for this area. Because it will become a big tourist attraction where thousands of tourists will visit the area specifically to see the art and take pictures”, he highlighted.

Oduber thanked the infrastructure commission that was established some time ago in order to plan, prepare and execute the various projects to enhance the product Aruba in its entirety. The commission consists of the Ministry of Tourism, Aruba Tourism Authority, DIP, DOW and TPEF, and they also consulted with DNM and the National Park on the different projects.

Oduber recognized and gave special thanks to all artists who worked on this project. “During the long days they worked from morning to night with a lot of passion, a lot of dedication to present a beautiful project of which we can all be proud.” □



Buy local. End-of-the-year events in the Mainstreet

ORANJESTAD – The Ministry of Economic Affairs, Communications and Sustainable Development, Idea-Aruba, and the Mainstreet merchants invite the Aruba community to shop in the main street in Oranjestad this end of the year.

There are three shopping nights on the following days:

- Friday, December 16, 2022;
- Saturday, December 17, 2022;
- Friday, December 23, 2022.

The Mainstreet stores have extended opening hours till 8.00 p.m.

There will be live entertainment in various places on Mainstreet from 5.00 p.m. – 7.00 p.m.

December 16
 Mario Chow (steelpan);
 Raynier Sprott (vocalist);
 Mtchll (vocalist);
 Rumba Caribeña (gaita).



December 17
 Stephanie (vocalist);
 Omar (violin/vocalist);
 Raynier Sprott (vocalist);
 Katatumbo (gaita).

December 23
 Raynier Sprott (vocalist);
 Karla Kings (vocalist);
 Mario Chow (steelpan);
 Rumba Caribeña (gaita).

Santa and his elves will also be present. It also has a photo booth to take pictures and much more. ☐

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Aruba Tourism Authority honored loyal visitors at Marriot's Aruba Ocean Club

The Aruba Tourism Authority recently recognized the Goodwill Ambassador of Aruba by presenting the Ambassador with the Goodwill certificate as a token of appreciation for visiting the island for more than 20 years consecutively.

Honoree was: **Harvey Marx** residents of New York, United States

Ms. Olga Ruiz representing the Aruba Tourism Authority, and members of the Marriott's Aruba Ocean Club bestowed the certification of the Ambassador and presented the Ambassador with gifts, and thanked them on behalf of the Government of Aruba for choosing Aruba as their favorite vacation destination for so many years. The Honoree definitely consid-

ers Aruba their home away from home!

Top reason for returning to Aruba, provided by the honoree was:
The beaches, the people
The water purified in Aruba drinkable
The people, the hospitality
The culture everyone is so warm & welcoming
Aruba is my home away from home! □



Can I have a ..., please?

ORANJESTAD — Want to taste something different for a change?? How about a different breakfast from what you are used to at your hotel. Hop in your car, drive around and anywhere around the island you will come across a local snack shop.

Here you will find all types of snacks loved by the locals. Try a pastechi, a Caribbean pastry filled with cheese or meat and fried up deliciously. Or perhaps you might want to try a croquette, a crusty little meat ball. A dedito is

also a good option, it's a stick made out of cheese or hotdog. If you want to try something more familiar go for a homemade hamburger or a ham and cheese toast, but with a local touch. All these snacks are ridiculously addictive. Freshen up with a delicious fruit shake (batido) made out of watermelon, strawberry, banana, papaya or just mix any fruit together. What makes these little snack shops more attractive is the warmth of its people and with the smile you are being served. □

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Symbolism of the frog

Etnia Nativa, through Island Insight, shares native cultural awareness, educates, safeguards Aruba's heritage, and encourages readers to experiment with an island keeper state of mind. Discover true destination values hidden behind our beaches, and since this native cultural blog get more reasons to love Aruba. This episode will discuss the symbolism of the frog and its representation in various cultures.

The frog is generally associated with the water element and its cleansing attributes. Different cultures associate the frogs with fertility due to the large number of eggs they lay, which is related to abundance.

In the oldest cultures, words such as luck, purity, rebirth, renewal, fertility, and leadership are related to frogs. In Egypt, Heket was a god with the head of a frog, and this was related to fertility and births. The Celts viewed the frog as the lord possessor of the land and believed that it represented healing and leadership powers due to its connection to water and rain.

In Japan, the frog is seen as a symbol of good luck, so it is common to see a frog amulet in any bag or purse to avoid losing money, especially for travelers whose crossing involves crossing a sea or river. In relation to the fact that travelers carry a frog amulet with them, it is because the word "frog" in Japanese is "kaeru," which also means to return in Japanese.

In current Western beliefs, it is thought that frog amulets can help us in different transitions in relation to vital stages of our lives: when we need an element that provides us security and when we want to improve our intuition, strength, and connection with the spiritual world.

Frogs play a variety of roles in Native American mythology, depending on the tribe. In some tribes, frogs are considered medicine animals that have healing powers and the ability to bring rain. In others, they are associated with disease and bad luck. To the Anishinabek tribes, who are resident in what are now Canada



and the United States, frogs represent transformation and growth. To Northwest Coast Native people, frogs are associated with springtime and renewal. In some Southern California cultures, the frog is a major mythological character who killed their creator god with evil witchcraft. And among indigenous tribes of Panama, such as the Guaymi and Kuna tribes, the rare golden frog is considered a fertility animal and is associated with wealth and a happy afterlife.

The frog is a symbol of: cleansing, renewal, rebirth, fertility, abundance, transformation, metamorphosis, life, ancient wisdom, and poison.

Even though the cane toad, which is associated with rituals and hallucinations, is present on the island and has been here for a long time, the dori is Aruba's only endemic frog species and an ancestral fertility totem.

Episode CLXXXIV 184

The association with the rainy season explains it all. Happy Dori's sing all night in celebration of the coming harvest abundance. Therefore, during these rainy days, it is ideal to try to spot one, or at least hear the dori sing its hypnotic song, calling for a mate.

The frog, as a spirit animal or totem, reminds us of the transient nature of our lives. As a symbol of transition and transformation, this spirit animal supports us in times of change. Strongly associated with the water element, it connects us with the world of emotions and feminine energies, as well as the process of cleansing, whether it's physical, emotional, or more spiritual in essence.

Now, are you intrigued by Aruba's origins and our cultural heritage? We encourage you to do something different outside of the tourist grid. Become one of the exclusive visitors to Etnia Nativa's private residential encounter set up, where you will be able to touch and be touched by authentic Aruba heritage, a spectacle of native art, archaic as well as archaeological artifacts, lithic tools, colonial furniture, and other items. Get inside a recycled environment full of peace and relaxation, knowledge, and information. □

Etnia Nativa is, since 1994, the home of Anthony, our acclaimed columnist, native artist, and island expert, who is a guide and lectures through his resplendent home. This is the only place to recreate and be introduced to an authentic glimpse of Aruba's native culture. Something completely different for a change—a contemporary Native Aruba experience!

Appointment is required + 297 592 2702 or etnianativa03@gmail.com



1822 – 2022 200 years of the Protestant Church in Aruba



The purpose behind these December meetings is to thank God for 200 years of the Protestant Church in Aruba, to wonder afresh at the love that God has given us in the coming of His Son and to invite people to deepen their faith and/or reconnect with God.

Saturday 17 December

Christmas sing-along 'Lessons and Carols 2022' Singing carols with each other, hearing the important biblical texts and preparing for a wonderful, soul-stirring Christmas. Various musicians will perform, and



many carols will be sung together. An evening with worship, music, poems and Christmas singing. After the Christmas concert: Christ-

mas stolen and mulled wine in the candlelit church garden.

Musicians:
Bert Rodenburg, organ



Pearl Peters, piano
Father Jairo Maduro, trumpet
Ruth Bonevalle, violin
Viola Heutger, violin

Nora Ritter, violin
Oranjestad church, Saturday 17 December, 7 PM, church open from 6.30 PM. □

More than 20 new plant species discovered in Aruba

ORANJESTAD – Aruba National Park Foundation, an independent foundation in charge of conservation and management of land and marine protected areas in Aruba, together with Wageningen University & Research (WUR) and Carmabi announced that more than 20 different spe-



cies of new plants were discovered in Aruba.

During a period of two weeks, Dr. Andre van Proosdij and Dr. John Jansen from WUR together with Erik Houtepen, Head of Consultancy Department at Carmabi, Giancarlo Nunes, Research and Conservation Manager at FPNA, local partners and volunteers visited different areas in Aruba like Saliña Malmok, Saliña Cerca, Ser'i Teishi and Sero Colorado to study more of Aruba's vegetation.

The last vegetation study done in Aruba was in the 1990s, and it was carried out by John de Freitas of Carmabi. This report was not published, however, last year Dutch Caribbean Nature Alliance (DCNA) and WUR allocated funds to complete and publish

the vegetation report for Aruba.

As part of the vegetation study, the team of international experts currently in Aruba also did a survey of the areas where the vegetation study was done in the 1990s, and also mapped protected areas that were not part of the vegetation study done previously, and registered plant species found in Aruba in the database of plant distribution which was launched last week. And finally, the team came to create capacity in our local partners and volunteers at organizations like DNM, StimAruba, Ban Lanta y Planta and Santa Rosa to equip other organizations with knowledge and ability in order to have more people with the capacity of carrying out flora and vegetation studies for

Aruba.

The vegetation study will provide data that can be used for a preliminary analysis to see how Aruba's vegetation has changed in the past 25 years. What can be confirmed is that more than 20 different new plant species were discovered for Aruba, and some of these species are new for the ABC islands and some are even new for the Dutch Caribbean. About half of the new plant species discovered are native to the Caribbean region and can be considered natural for Aruba's flora. Some examples are the *Melochia parvifolia* and the *Cienfuegosia cf. affinis* (pictured) which were discovered by local experts.

The other half of newly discovered plants come from other parts of the world



and were intentionally or accidentally introduced in Aruba. Some of these plants are invasive and present a threat to Aruba's natural ecosystem. Examples of these are *Cylindropuntia tunicata* and *Scaevola taccada*.

The data that was collected about plant and vegetation species will contribute to improve knowledge, understanding and conservation of Aruba's natural patrimony. □

CROSSWORD

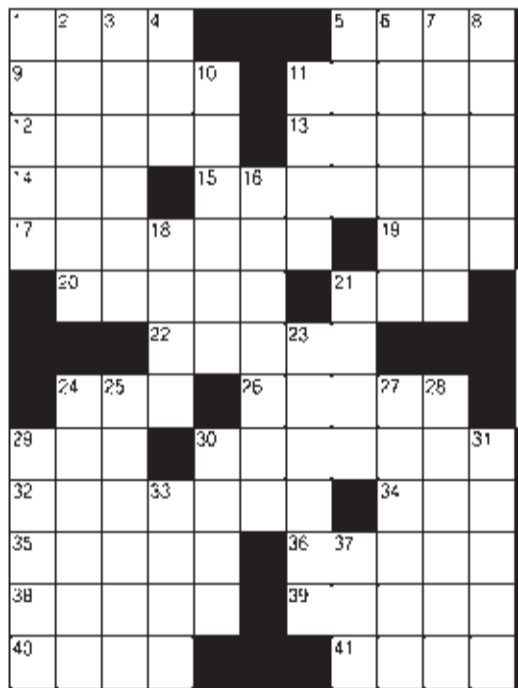
By **THOMAS JOSEPH**

- ACROSS**
- 38 Berth
 - 1 Garden places
 - sections
 - 5 Feeding Jeter
 - time
 - needs
 - 40 Appear
 - 41 Minus
 - 9 Dote on
 - 11 Scoundrel
 - 12 Plains grazers
 - 13 Central
 - 14 Greek vowel
 - 15 Pulling with effort
 - 17 Timber business
 - 19 Sandal sight
 - 20 Get more out of
 - 21 — Moines
 - 22 Drummer Ringo
 - 24 Mob pariah
 - 26 Grayish brown
 - 29 Swindle
 - 30 Gaiter
 - 32 Falling behind
 - 34 Cain's mother
 - 35 Did nothing
 - 36 Spine-tingling
- DOWN**
- 1 Tower setting
 - 2 Copy fixer
 - 3 Rx amount
 - 4 Hit show letters
 - 5 Large bell sound
 - 6 Set afire
 - 7 — Aires
 - 8 Suit material
 - 10 Sign up
 - 11 Tony winner
 - 12 Diana capital
 - 16 Left on the plate
 - 18 Strong wind
 - 21 Pharmacy buy
 - 23 In tatters
 - 24 Band aide
 - 25 "Life of Pi" director
 - 27 South Dakota capital
 - 28 Is jealous of
 - 29 Film excerpts
 - 30 Tops
 - 31 Tech whizzes
 - 33 Start of an idea
 - 37 Sushi choice



Yesterday's answer

- 11 Tony winner
- 12 Diana capital
- 16 Left on the plate
- 18 Strong wind
- 21 Pharmacy buy
- 23 In tatters
- 24 Band aide
- 25 "Life of Pi" director
- 27 South Dakota capital
- 28 Is jealous of
- 29 Film excerpts
- 30 Tops
- 31 Tech whizzes
- 33 Start of an idea
- 37 Sushi choice



12-14

AXYDLBAXR
IS LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three I's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

12-14 **CRYPTOQUOTE**

FUIHWBPRW ARMLW R PRDHF
ARGY ZMLI BUBW AZIKY. RGY
OLUZKY. LMLITBUHGD HW
WZQBLI RGY PZIL OLRVBHQVK.

— GZIPRG MHGFLGB ELRKL
Yesterday's Cryptoquote: IF YOU WANT A HAPPY ENDING, THAT DEPENDS, OF COURSE, ON WHERE YOU STOP YOUR STORY. — ORSON WELLES

Millennial Money: Prepping to buy a home or invest in 2023?



Fresh seafood is shown for sale at a grocery store, Wednesday, July 27, 2022, in Surfside, Fla.

Associated Press

By **ELIZABETH AYOOLA** of NerdWallet

It has been quite the year. In 2022, we've lived through high inflation, stock market lows, housing market frenzies and ongoing Federal Reserve rate hikes. Although we don't have a crystal ball to predict what will happen to the economy next year, we could use this year's events as a guide: Things may continue to be rocky. If homeownership and investing are on your 2023 goals list, here are some questions to ask yourself before whipping out your spreadsheet, money apps or notebooks.

WHAT AM I WILLING TO SACRIFICE IN TERMS OF SPACE?

Whether you have a goal of buying a new home or renting a new place next year, there's a lot to consider. For instance, 30-year fixed mortgage rates went from an average of 3.45% in January to 6.90% in October thanks to inflation and Fed rate increases. The Fed has already raised interest rates 75 basis

points four times this year. This, coupled with housing shortages, has driven the national median price of homes above \$400,000 for the first time, according to the National Association of Realtors.

Homeownership may still be an attainable goal, but you might have to make some sacrifices, says Zaneilia Harris, a certified financial planner and president of Harris & Harris Wealth Management Group in Upper Marlboro, Maryland.

"You need to evaluate what you are willing to give up in space in order to own property," Harris says. "You may have to gradually get to where you want, as opposed to just going straight into a single-family house." This could mean starting off with a condo or townhouse and then using the equity from the condo to purchase your next property, Harris says.

HOW CAN I MAKE HOMEOWNERSHIP MORE AFFORDABLE?

Another portal to homeownership Harris recom-

mends is the Neighborhood Assistance Corporation of America, also known as NACA. It's a mortgage program that allows working people to purchase a home with no down payment, closing costs, fees or stringent credit prerequisites.

Members can also buy their homes at a below-market interest rate. The program is currently in 28 states and the District of Columbia.

Buying a home in 2023 could also be more attainable if you're willing to get a roomie, says Jocelyn Wright, a CFP and retirement income certified professional at PF Wealth Management Group in Bala Cynwyd, Pennsylvania. This is something she did with her sister in 2017.

"It's not going to be forever necessarily, but this gave us the opportunity to have our own home, and we can leverage the equity and all of that going forward," she says.

HOW DIVERSE IS MY PORTFOLIO?

This year hasn't been the greenest for investors — at the start of December, the S&P 500 was down more than 15% this year. The market's volatility could understandably make investors unsure about how to move forward. Financial professionals say a diverse portfolio and taking the right amount of risk might be steps in the right direction.

Keep diversification in mind, says Wright. Diversification is when you invest in a variety of assets to manage risk and market volatility.

The FTX and BlockFi collapses that happened in November are a reminder about why to avoid investing too heavily in one area. "Unfortunately, a lot of newer investors were very excited about Bitcoin, crypto, (and) all of that, and forgot those lessons," Wright says. "You don't put your short-term money into the market, and those rules always apply." □

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Nancy Pelosi's career chronicled in new film by her daughter

By **MICHAEL BALSAMO**

Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — For Alexandra Pelosi, the brutal attack on her father earlier this year was a culmination of vitriol that had been building for decades. Her family's name, she says, has been weaponized for years, turned into a curse word for Republicans.

Then, in October, a man broke into the family's San Francisco home and attacked Paul Pelosi with a hammer, leaving him unconscious in a pool of his own blood.

The bubbling political rhetoric that led to that moment is chronicled in a new documentary premiering Tuesday night on HBO. The film, "Pelosi in the House," directed and produced by Alexandra Pelosi, the youngest of House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's five children, follows the elder Pelosi's career over three decades.

The film offers a rare behind-the-scenes look at her political life, chronicling major milestones from her election to Congress in 1987 to becoming the first female House speaker in 2007 to the insurrection at the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021, as Congress was voting to certify Joe Biden's



Filmmaker Alexandra Pelosi, left, and Nancy Pelosi, right, attend "Tony Bennett Celebrates 90: The Best Is Yet to Come" in New York on Sept. 15, 2016.

presidential win. "There's a thread from the very first time they started taking ads out against Nancy Pelosi and turning her into a witch and turning our last name into a curse word. You can follow that thread 20 years later to my father getting attacked," Alexandra Pelosi said in an interview with The Associated Press.

Pelosi's film follows her

mother, literally, through the Capitol and behind the scenes as she negotiates key votes for major pieces of legislation. It also depicts threats the family received, including a severed pig's head that was delivered to the speaker's San Francisco home just days before the attack on the Capitol. The camera was also rolling on Jan. 6 as the House speaker prepared for the certification of the presi-

dential election and as rioters began smashing through the doors and windows, violently shoving past overwhelmed police officers, leaving many officers bruised and bloodied. The film includes extended clips recorded as Pelosi and other congressional leaders are rushed out of the Capitol and evacuated to Fort McNair, a nearby Army base. It captures frantic leaders calling

Associated Press

the defense secretary, attorney general, then-Vice President Mike Pence and other officials trying to get assistance to the Capitol. Some of the footage was played during a hearing of the House panel investigating the attack on the Capitol.

Alexandra Pelosi and her team provided the footage to the committee.

"When they took Nancy Pelosi out of the chamber, she didn't even get to take her cellphone. They rushed her out. And she was making calls to the defense secretary, the attorney general, the vice president, and I thought there should be a record of this," Alexandra Pelosi said. "She didn't get to take the House clerk, who has a transcript of all this, to record what was happening. This was historic what was happening, and somebody needed to have a record of what was said," she said.

Among those historic moments: discussion about whether to move the entire Congress — all 100 senators and 435 members of the House — by bus to Fort McNair and convene the joint session there to continue the certification of the election. □

Nolan to debut 'Oppenheimer' IMAX trailer with 'Avatar 2'

By **LINDSEY BAHR**

AP Film Writer

Christopher Nolan is ready to show the world the first full-length trailer for his new epic "Oppenheimer" and he's doing so in the splashiest way possible: With an exclusive IMAX spot in front of "Avatar: The Way of Water."

The "Oppenheimer" trailer will debut globally on IMAX screens playing the "Avatar" sequel, which begins its theatrical run Thursday. It will not be made available online and is distinct from the trailer that will show on non-IMAX screens.

Nolan's film, about the enigmatic, Harvard-educated theoretical physicist who helped develop the first atomic bomb, is based

on Kai Bird and Martin J. Sherwin's Pulitzer Prize-winning biography "American Prometheus: The Triumph and Tragedy of J. Robert Oppenheimer," and stars Cillian Murphy in the title role. The thriller explores the paradox of the man who infamously called himself the "destroyer of worlds."

"The immersive quality of IMAX is massively important in transporting the audience into the mind and experience of this person who forever altered our world," Nolan said in a statement to The Associated Press.

The star-studded cast includes Emily Blunt as Katherine "Kitty" Oppenheimer, his wife, a biologist and botanist, Matt Damon as Manhattan Project direc-

tor General Leslie Groves Jr. and Robert Downey Jr. as Lewis Strauss, a founding commissioner of the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission. Rami Malek, Florence Pugh, Benny Safdie, Michael Angarano, Josh Hartnett and Kenneth Branagh are also among the large ensemble.

Nolan and cinematographer Hoyte van Hoytema (who collaborated on "Dunkirk," "Tenet" and "Interstellar") used a combination of IMAX 65mm and 65mm large format film to shoot the film, which also boasts the first ever use of IMAX black and white analog photography for some sections.

In an interview with Total Film magazine this week,

Nolan said that they recreated the Trinity test, the first successful detonation of a nuclear weapon, without

the use of CGI. He also said it's one of the most challenging projects he's ever undertaken. □



This image released by Universal Pictures shows Cillian Murphy as J. Robert Oppenheimer in a scene from the film "Oppenheimer," written and directed by Christopher Nolan.

Associated Press

EXPLAINER: Inside the NBA's process on changing trophies

By **TIM REYNOLDS**
AP Basketball Writer

There's been an evolution of the NBA's Most Valuable Player trophy in the 70 or so years since it was first dreamed up.

It used to be called the President's Trophy. Players used to do the voting. In time, it all changed; the trophy was known as the Maurice Podoloff Trophy, and a media panel of 100 writers and broadcasters now handles the voting.

As of Tuesday, there's a new trophy and a new name: The Michael Jordan Trophy. It's loaded with tributes to his career, foremost among them that it weighs 23.6 pounds and stands 23.6 inches tall; the 23 for his jersey, the 6 for his six championships.

That took some serious work on the design end, but in the end, it was exactly what Jordan and his team wanted. It is the biggest move in a long line of trophy tweaks and twists by the NBA in recent years. A look:

WHY IS THE NBA RENAMING TROPHIES?

Commissioner Adam Silver has made clear, especially after the league went into the 2020 season restart bubble at Walt Disney World because of the pandemic, that the NBA needs to do even more to pay tribute to its greatest players particularly some of the



In this photo provided by Andrew Kenney/NBA, The Michael Jordan Trophy is displayed in Los Angeles, Dec. 7, 2022. The NBA unveiled the new trophy on Tuesday, Dec. 13, 2022, which will be given to the basketball league's Most Valuable Player starting with this season.

Associated Press

league's Black players from a generation or two ago, whose stories may not necessarily resonate among younger fans of today.

Rebranding and redesigning is not an easy process, particularly in a league that considers itself to be steeped with tradition.

It was not a coincidence that the six new division championship trophies introduced late last season were named for Black

pioneers of the game: Nat "Sweetwater" Clifton, Wayne Embry, Earl Lloyd, Willis Reed, Sam Jones and Chuck Cooper.

"I know that what we do in this league is important symbolically, not just for sports but for other industries, and people watch us all around the world," Silver said at last season's NBA Finals. **IS THIS A CONFLICT FOR JORDAN?**

No, this is not a conflict for

Jordan even though he owns the Charlotte Hornets. Jordan rarely enters the spotlight anymore and picks his spots very carefully; he did not want this trophy to be in his likeness, did not speak out about Tuesday's announcement and rarely offers public comment on any topic.

The MVP trophy tends to be presented by the commissioner; it wouldn't seem likely that Jordan would be called upon to do so, even though there is no rule tampering-related or otherwise that would prevent it.

The NBA asked Bill Russell to present the NBA Finals MVP trophy that bears his name and he did for many years, until the pandemic and his health prevented him from continuing that tradition. Russell died earlier this year.

HOW MANY NAMED TROPHIES DOES THE NBA HAVE?

It's a lot. There's the Larry O'Brien (NBA champions), the Jordan (MVP), the Russell (NBA Finals MVP), Red Auerbach (coach of the year), Joe Dumars (sportsmanship), Larry Bird and Magic Johnson (conference finals MVP's), Kobe Bryant (All-Star MVP), and the six divisional trophies.

There's also a slew of new or rebranded ones announced Tuesday: Hakeem Olajuwon (defensive player of the year), John Havlicek (sixth man), Wilt Chamberlain (rookie), and George

Mikan (most improved). A new trophy this year is the Clutch Player of the Year, named for "Mr. Clutch" himself, Jerry West.

"There are few greater thrills as a basketball player than coming through for your teammates and fans when they need it most," West said. "This new trophy will be awarded to the player who best delivers in those moments."

Kareem Abdul-Jabbar has the league's social justice champion trophy bearing his name, David Robinson the NBA Community Assist Monthly Award one, and Bob Lanier has the Community Assist season-long trophy.

WHO CHANGES THE NAMES?

This wasn't one or two people. The league formed a group of about 20 people, from at least a half-dozen different departments, to meet and decide how to change the trophies and in some cases the namesake elements.

The process took several months, the league said.

WHAT NEXT?

It doesn't seem right that David Stern, the league's commissioner for 30 years, Silver's predecessor and mentor and one of the people who basically helped saved the league from financial peril in the 1980's doesn't have a trophy bearing his name. □

Messi, Argentina beat Croatia 3-0 to reach World Cup final

By **STEVE DOUGLAS**
AP Sports Writer

LUSAIL, Qatar (AP) — Lionel Messi is back in the World Cup final with Argentina on his mission to win soccer's biggest prize for the first time. And, at 35, he could hardly be playing any better. Messi converted a penalty and had a hand in the other two goals by Julián Álvarez, leading Argentina to a 3-0 win over Croatia on Tuesday that set up a meeting with either France or Morocco in Sunday's title match.

It will be Messi's second World Cup final. Argentina

lost the other one to Germany in 2014 in what might be his last appearance at the tournament.

It could yet be the perfect way to go out for a player widely regarded as one of the game's best players, if not the best.

Messi is thrilling his legion of fans along the way, with his swivel and driving run to set up the third goal for Álvarez in the 69th minute epitomizing his confidence and swagger. He is embracing the responsibility of leading Argentina to its third World Cup title, scoring in five of his six games in Qatar.

He even had a penalty saved in the game in which he didn't score.

Croatia failed in its bid to reach a second straight World Cup final after conceding two goals in a five-minute span from the 34th, just when the team was looking comfortable at Lusail Stadium.

There was a moment midway through the first half that must have struck fear into all Argentines, when Messi appeared clutch his left hamstring and rub it.

Was Argentina's superstar going to have to come off? No such luck for Croatia. □



Argentina's Lionel Messi scores the opening goal from the penalty spot during the World Cup semifinal soccer match between Argentina and Croatia at the Lusail Stadium in Lusail, Qatar, Tuesday, Dec. 13, 2022.

Associated Press

NFL fight against fakery leads to feud with Jordan

By **ARNIE STAPLETON**
AP Pro Football Writer

After reminding teams to leave the fakery on the soccer pitch and the bluffing to the poker table, the NFL finds itself in a feverish feud with New Orleans Saints star Cameron Jordan.

The seven-time Pro Bowl defensive end vehemently denies the league's accusation that he pretended to get hurt in a recent game against Tom Brady and the Buccaneers and is appealing his \$50,000 fine.

In a memo sent to teams on Dec. 2 and obtained by The Associated Press, the NFL said the league has "observed multiple instances of clubs making a deliberate attempt to stop play unnecessarily this season."

That's a big no-no, especially in an era when professional football has gone from evading the gambling industry to embracing it.

A growing number of states have legal sports betting markets, including Arizona, where State Farm Stadium in Glendale now features an on-site BetMGM Sportsbook and will host the Super Bowl in February.

That will make Arizona the first regulated sports betting state to host the big game since the U.S. Supreme Court struck down the federal ban on sports betting outside of Nevada, known



New Orleans Saints defensive end Cameron Jordan (94) reacts between plays in the first half of an NFL football game against the Tampa Bay Buccaneers in Tampa, Fla., Monday, Dec. 5, 2022.
Associated Press

as the Professional and Amateur Sports Protection Act, in 2018.

The most popular sports league in North America, one that generates revenues of more than \$17 billion a year, cannot afford any dishonesty, real or perceived.

Thus, the league's memo to teams, which included the pertinent part of the 2022 Policy Manual for Member Clubs that states, "Any deliberate attempt by a team and/or player to stop play unnecessarily; prolong or delay the process; improv-

erly take advantage of a stoppage in play; or influence the actions of an ATC Spotter will be considered an 'unfair act' and may result in discipline, in addition to any on-field penalty assessed by the Game Officials."

Football has seen its share of make-believe injuries just like baseball has phantom tags and fake throws, and basketball and soccer have their share of flops. On the gridiron, it's usually done to slow the opponents' momentum or pace and give the defense a

breather and a chance to reset.

The Saints and Jordan deny they purposely delayed the game in the fourth quarter last week before Brady engineered a late comeback from a 13-point deficit with three minutes remaining for a 17-16 Buccaneers win.

The Saints led 16-3 midway through the fourth quarter under the Monday night lights and Tampa Bay was facing fourth-and-10 on its own 25 when Jordan stalled the game by signaling to the Saints' bench that he had an injury. When

the game resumed, the Buccaneers punted.

The NFL's memo said the league "continues to emphasize the importance of upholding the integrity of the game and competitive fairness as our highest priority." What about the integrity of his good name?

That's what Jordan has been wondering aloud as he assails the league for fining him along with the team (\$350,000), head coach Dennis Allen (\$100,000) and co-defensive coordinator Ryan Nielsen (\$50,000).

Allen said the team did nothing wrong but he can't discuss the matter further at this time.

Jordan sure can.

He said Monday he has a left foot sprain and if the matter were in civil court, he'd "countersue for triple the amount."

Jordan and his agent, Doug Hendrickson, have said they are appealing the \$50,000 fine, which Hendrickson labeled "idiotic." The Saints said over the weekend that Jordan's injury was real, insisting he "felt foot pain following a third-down play and sought medical attention. He entered the blue medical tent and was examined by the medical staff and following the examination he was taped and able to finish the game." □

Cardinals QB Kyler Murray out for season with torn ACL



Arizona Cardinals quarterback Kyler Murray (1) falls to the ground due to an injury during the first half of an NFL football game against the New England Patriots, Monday, Dec. 12, 2022, in Glendale, Ariz.

Associated Press

By **DAVID BRANDT**
AP Sports Writer

TEMPE, Ariz. (AP) — Arizona Cardinals quarterback Kyler Murray has a torn ACL and will miss the remainder of the season.

Cardinals coach Kliff Kingsbury confirmed the extent of the injury during his Tuesday news conference.

The news is not a surprise after the 25-year-old injured his knee on the third play of Monday night's 27-13 loss to the New England Patriots.

The fourth-year quarterback was flushed out of the pocket and running to his

right when he tried to juke past a Patriots defender, but tumbled to the grass in obvious pain.

Players from both teams surrounded the quarterback before he was carted off the field with a towel draped over his head.

The Cardinals and Kingsbury feared that Murray had a serious injury after Monday's game with Kingsbury admitting it "doesn't look good."

Further tests on Tuesday confirmed that pessimism. Murray was replaced by backup Colt McCoy, who will likely remain the starter

for the rest of the season. The Cardinals (4-9) have lost five of six, including their past three.

The Cardinals posted to social media "Minor setback for a major comeback. We know @K1 will be back and better than ever. Heal soon QB1."

Arizona's recent hopes as a franchise have revolved around the development of Murray, who was taken with the No. 1 overall pick out of Oklahoma in 2019.

The quarterback's fourth season has been a tough one. And that was before Monday's injury. □